

I go to Washington.

With my mind at rest concerning my future I performed my daily work with zeal and all my spare time outside the office was devoted to reading. Imagine my surprise, amounting almost to consternation when, toward the close of February, 1893, I received a telegram from the War Department to the effect that I had been appointed a stenographer and typewriter at an entrance salary of \$1,000 a year, and directing me to report for duty at Washington immediately.

I said nothing about the telegram to my employers ^{at} the first because I wished to make up my own mind ^{independently} ^{first}. I had to decide whether it would be ^{more} ~~most~~ advantageous to accept the position at a certain salary of \$1,000 with the privilege of living in Washington, or to continue in my present employment another six months, saving as much of my salary as possible, and entering the Chicago University in the autumn with only my savings and what I might pick up ^{as} a shorthand writer to see me through the four year course at the university. Which would prove most advantageous in the years to come? These alternatives kept revolving in my mind during the day and on the way home after the office closed. Mother noticed my preoccupation at the supper table and asked what was the matter. I showed her the telegram. She was much elated and seemed to think it was a great opportunity. Both she and father urged me to accept the Washington appointment because it was a certainty, while the university project seemed to them rather precarious. *P* The next day I showed the telegram to Mr. Baldwin. His first reaction was adverse and he spoke disparaging-

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ly of Washington and reminded me of my obligation to remain with the firm. Judge Scott came in at that moment and expressed himself as surprised that I should hesitate. I explained my dilemma, the choice between a desirable position at Washington and a four year course at the Chicago University, and that while I was under the necessity of earning a living, nevertheless my desire for an education was stranger than the desire to earn money. He said that if this was my difficulty he could assure me that in Washington there were excellent night schools and I could both earn a salary and at the same time gratify my desire for instruction. He suggested that I talk the matter over with Mr. Reese, the new preacher of the Congregationalist Church who usually spent an hour or more each day in our office writing his sermons and letters. He was a short, round, energetic, dark complexioned man from Wales with an excellent singing voice. When Mr. Reese came in I broached the subject to him and he at once took a lively interest in the matter and urged me to accept the Washington position. He said he had been employed in one of the departments in Washington for a period of years and had taken evening courses of study and graduated, and that life in Washington for a few years was equivalent to a liberal education. *P* This first hand information of the possibility of study while earning a salary in Washington decided me to accept the appointment. I announced my decision to Judge Scott and Mr. Baldwin the same afternoon and asked how soon I might be released. They very kindly agreed to let me go immediately. I telegraphed an answer to the War Department that I would report for duty on March 10. And so one of the important decisions of

my life was taken on rather inadequate information. While I have never regretted the decision because I believe I would do the same in a similar situation,ⁿ nevertheless I have sometimes wondered what my career would have been had I gone to the university.

It took two or three days to pack up my books, clothing, and personal belongings. My bookcase, shotgun, and some tools and things I could not well take with me I left with father to try to sell. The news of my Washington appointment spread quickly and I discovered that I had many friends. An article in the local paper spoke of me in most flattering terms. Mother was greatly excited and father somewhat disturbed at the prospect of my leaving. I realized as I had not done before quite so poignantly how closely bound together our lives had been, especially since Sister Nellie had married and left the family roof. But inasmuch as I had decided to go I wished to have the separation over and the journey and the new life begun at the earliest possible moment, so that the last day seemed a long one. I went about bidding good bye to friends, said farewell to Judge Scott and Mr. Baldwin who assured me that if I was disappointed in Washington I could return to them at any time, and the evening was spent with father and mother.

The next morning the train left early. Father, mother, and some friends were there to see me off. Just before the train left father handed me a twenty dollar gold piece, saying "Lee, you have always been a good boy and I have never been able to help you; take this and spend it on yourself." Mother threw her arms about my neck, kissed me, and said she was proud of me. Father saw me seated in the day coach, shook hands, and went outside to stand with mother near the window where they could

see me. We were all three speechless with emotion and about as unhappy as people could be. Ever ~~ex~~ since that experience I have insisted that the proper place for relatives to part is at the door of the house and not at the train or steamship. At last the whistle blew and the train slowly got under way. As it did so we waved our hands and tried to say a last good by. After the train got under way I put my head out of the window and looked back and saw them turn slowly side by side, his arm around her shoulders and her head bent forward, so that I knew she was weeping. My throat seemed to tie itself up into a knot, I had difficulty in breathing, and in spite of my efforts at self control the tears ran down my cheeks.

This gust of emotion soon passed and I became interested in watching the landscape flit by, alternate strips of prairie and blackjack timber, small farms with unpainted two-room pine shacks set on posts and bare yards, men plowing in the fields and corn just coming up, and crows and buzzards flying about. Soon we began to pass towns I heard about but had not seen, Clarks-ville, some other small towns, and then Texarkana on the boundary between Texas and Arkansas. I had with me a basket of food that mother had prepared and that lasted until I reached Washington. From Texarkana we passed into Arkansas, through an undulating, hilly, wooded region, with occasional small towns and farming sections, many of the farm houses being of logs. We passed through Little Rock, the first State capital I had seen. There was no sleeping car on the train, so I sleep all night in my seat.

The second day we were in Missouri where farms were more numerous. Here the trees had not yet begun to leaf out and the

country was still bare. I had to change cars at St. Louis to the Baltimore & Ohio Railway which runs through southern Illinois and Indiana to Cincinnati, and thence through West Virginia and Maryland to Washington and Baltimore. I was greatly interested in the Mississippi, but disappointed in its muddy appearance, and it did not seem nearly so wide as I had expected. The trip through southern Illinois was disappointing. Mother, in her homesickness in Texas and her golden memories of her childhood and youth in northern Illinois, had described it in all its spring and autumn beauty, its hills, woods, fine farms, and clear running streams. Southern Illinois as I saw it before spring opened and under a leaden and drizzling sky, was an uninteresting flat country with muddy roads, straggling towns, with ugly wooden buildings, unpaved muddy streets, and a dreary monotonous appearance. I was becoming weary also from the long ride and confinement. We approached Cincinnati in the late afternoon and I was much excited in the glimpses I caught of the Ohio River. It grew dark soon after leaving Cincinnati and crossing the Ohio.

The third day we crossed the mountains. They were the first I had ever seen, but did not look anything like the pictures of mountains in books with precipitous sides and jagged peaks that pierce the sky. To me they seemed little more than steep hills. From Cumberland to Washington I caught glimpses of the Potomac River. During this last day as I approached my destination I felt more and more a stranger and a little apprehensive as to what I should do on arrival. I still had with me the market basket mother had insisted on my taking and it was half full of food that I could not eat, fried chick-

en, rolls, sandwiches, cake and pie. It hurt me to throw good food away, but I could not bring myself to offer it to any one in the coach, and I was determined not to carry the basket into Washington with me. Before reaching the city I raised the window and when I thought no one was looking tossed the basket out, and then tried to look unconcerned as if I had no connection with it, but I hoped that a tramp might find it and have something to eat.

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First Impressions.

The old railway station near the Capitol building was a small one and not nearly so pretentious as the one at Dallas. On reaching the street I was besieged by a group of hack drivers. I selected a negro driver and asked him to take me to a cheap hotel. He took me to a small hotel on Four and One-half Street near Pennsylvania Avenue where I engaged a room and gave my trunk check to the porter. I showed the hotel clerk the telegram I had received from the War Department and asked him where it was. To my surprise he showed no particular interest in the telegram and was not at all impressed by its importance.

Following the directions given by the hotel clerk I walked up Pennsylvania Avenue, passed the Treasury Department, saw the White House and Lafayette Square, and gazed at the imposing office building occupied by the State, War, and Navy Departments. I felt rather small, but took courage when I thought that in another week I would be employed in that great building. It was after business hours so I could not enter then. In the evening I took another long walk up and down the Avenue. I was disappointed in its appearance, at its many small and ugly shops, and at the old cable cars. It seemed to me that Washington was far behind Dallas, which had electric street cars, better and

brighter street lights, and finer hotels.

My first Sunday in Washington.

The next day, Sunday, was clear, bright, warm, and pleasant. After breakfast I walked to the Avenue and then up to the Capitol Building. I admired this structure greatly. It was one of the few buildings that came up to my expectations. I walked around it several times and viewed the city from different angles. To the west I could see up the broad Pennsylvania Avenue to the stately Treasury Building at Fifteenth Street. To the southwest across the Potomac I could see the classic Lee Mansion facing the river. To the south was the broad, shining Potomac, with Alexandria in the distance. East and north were portions of the city beyond which were the low, wooded Maryland hills. Directly east of the Capitol was the foundation of the present Library of Congress surrounded by a board wall.

While standing on the western terrace I had my first experience with a professional guide. As I stood looking across the Mall at Arlington beyond the river a kindly, benevolent looking old gentleman came up and stood beside me and began pointing out and ^u naming places of interest. I thought he was a very nice old gentleman. However, I wished to be alone and explore and find out things for myself and with a respectful nod in his direction I said "I thank you, Sir," and turned to leave him. He expostulated, saying "But, Sir, people usually give me something." "What for?" I asked. He answered, "I am a guide and am entitled to charge for my services." As he said this he turned back his coat and displayed a badge. "But," I replied, "I did not ask for your services; when I need a guide I will

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engage his services for a definite time and for a definite amount and will pay it if I agree in advance to pay it, but not otherwise." I turned and walked away, but found I could not rid myself of him. He followed and became threatening. Finally I stopped and asked how much people usually paid him. He said that gentlemen usually paid him one dollar, other people fifty cents, and country people twentyfive cents. I handed him ten cents with the remark that if he followed me another step or said anything to me again I would report him to the police, and if he did not like it he could step over to a policeman I saw across the grounds and tell him all about it. He took the ten cents and departed. In the afternoon I walked through south Washington to the wharves and back. To me the river was an object of great interest and I looked forward to becoming acquainted with it.

Entering on duty at the War Department.

Monday morning, March 10, 1893, with beating heart I entered the stately building occupied by the War Department at Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street a few minutes before 9 o'clock and was told that the Record and Pension Office was on the second floor. There I was instructed to see Mr. Rapp in the chief clerk's office. He was an agreeable young man and when I showed him the telegram I had received he made some entries on his records. Then he consulted Mr. Booth, private secretary to the chief, Col. Ainsworth. Mr. Rapp returned and said I was to report to the chief of division at the Tenth Street Building and instructed me how to find it. I was disappointed that I was not to be employed in the great building next to the White House. Following instructions I walked down G Street, which

...my services for a definite time and for a definite amount
and all pay is at 10 cents an hour to say it, and not other-
wise. I turned and walked away, but found I could not find my
path of him. He followed me because I was walking. Finally I
stopped and asked him what people usually paid him. He said that
gentlemen usually paid him one dollar, other people fifty cents, and
ordinary people twenty-five cents. I handed him ten cents with
the remark that if he followed me again I would report him to the police, and if he did not
to the police. I would report him to the police, and if he did not
like it he could stop. I was walking I was walking and I was walking
and told him all about it. He took the money and disappeared.
In the afternoon I walked through some buildings to the
and back. To me the river was an object of great interest and
I looked forward to seeing it. I was walking and I was walking
walking on only at the end of the street.
Monday morning, March 10, 1914, after seeing what I expected
the street, walking through it, and I was walking and I was walking
Vand Avenue and I was walking and I was walking and I was walking
and was told that the house and the house and the house and the house
second floor. There was a man in the house and the house and the house
and the house and the house and the house and the house and the house
I asked him the name of the house and the house and the house and the house
on his records. Then he told me the name of the house and the house and the house
to the house, Col. Alphonse. Mr. Alphonse and I went to the house
to report to the chief of division at the house and the house and the house
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then was mostly lined with residences, to Tenth Street, and south on that street to a ~~xxxx~~ building which I recognized from Mr. Rapp's description. It was the old Ford's Theater Building in which President Lincoln was shot. It was a plain brick structure on the east side of 10th Street and faced west. It had three large floors without partitions and was occupied by a large force of clerks at nine tables engaged in copying on cards information from military and hospital records of the Civil War. I saw the chief of division, my name was entered on a record, and I was assigned to a chair at a pine table with three other clerks, two of them negroes. *P* My feelings at being placed at the same table with negroes can be understood and appreciated only by one who has grown up in the South. I hesitated and asked the messenger if there was no other seat available in the room. He pointed to a vacant chair at another table, but when I saw there were negroes at that table also I said, "Well, I suppose I will get used to this, ~~xxxx I suppose.~~" *P* I was given a supply of blank cards, pen, ink, and blotters, and a muster roll to copy. It was all very simple and could be learned in five minutes. I was expert with a pen and set to work industriously. About an hour later a young man working at a nearby table strolled over to me and stooping down said in a low voice, "Don't work so hard." Looking up in surprise I ~~xxxx~~ asked ~~xxxx~~. "Why?" "Because" he replied "you won't get any more pay or credit for working hard; you are fast, and if you keep it up you will make it embarrassing for all the others." Then he passed on. "Make it embarrassing for the others" I repeated, and grinned at the thought. From that moment I deliberately speeded up, trying to see how many cards I could finish. Several times during the day I was ap-

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proached by others with the same message, "Don't work so hard." However, the chief of division smiled encouragingly at me when I turned in my work at 4 p.m.

Bank and Board.

7 The next day several clerks came and introduced themselves to me. One of them asked if I had found a bank yet and offered to accompany me to one and identify me so that I could open an account at the noon hour. At noon he took me to the Woods Bank on F Street. Later I had occasion to regret this. Another clerk asked if I had found a boarding house and offered to show me a desirable place convenient to the office. After office hours he took me to 903 H Street, N.W., where I engaged a room. It was a small two story frame house kept by an elderly lady and her daughter, Miss Pumphrey. I had a medium sized front room on the second floor facing south, furnished, for which I paid \$12 per month. The next day I had my belongings sent over from the hotel. I obtained my meals at a boarding house on the same block for \$16 a month.

Routine Work.

7 For several days I was extremely busy, at the office working like a beaver, maintaining an average from from 250 to 350 record cards a day as compared with 60 to 150 by the other clerks who did their work leisurely; and morning and evening exploring the city on foot. The work was easy, little more than child's play except for the confinement and I wondered why the government paid such good salaries for having it done, \$1,000 to \$1400 a year. However I was thoroughly dissatisfied with it. I had acquired skill as a shorthand writer and typewriter after a tremendous amount of work and I did not propose to give it up for routine copying with pen and ink that any unskilled youth could do. As far as I could see one could spend his whole life

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at copying with a pen and never learn anything, but rather he would forget everything he already knew. Also I did not like the idea of simply being one of a roomfull of human automatons. Nor did I like sitting at the same table with negroes, even if they were well behaved. The more I thought of the situation the less I liked it, and I decided that it could not last and that I would resign unless I could be shifted to some other work and situation more agreeable. The next morning I went to the chief of the division and asked about the shorthand work in the department. He said all the shorthand work was done at headquarters in the main building. I said I wanted a transfer to the shorthand division. He tried to dissuade me, but when I said I was ready to resign rather than continue copying records he ^{said} ~~said~~ he would ^{agree} ~~agree~~ bring the matter to the attention of Col. Ainsworth. I asked ~~why~~ if there was any reason why I should not see Col. Ainsworth immediately and settle the matter without delay. He replied that that would not be permitted, that it was contrary to the rules and regulations, and without precedent; that Col. Ainsworth visited the 10th St. office one or more times a week and he would mention my case to the Colonel and try to arrange an interview. Within an hour a messenger came to my desk and said the Colonel was down stairs and would see me. ~~He~~ I found the Colonel to be a large man of commanding presence in the prime of life, a man of about 40 with a strong face, piercing black eyes, mustache and hair, and a dominant expression. When I entered he looked up from some papers and said ^{curtly} "Well, what is it?" I did not like either the expression of his face or the tone of his voice so looking him squarely in the eye I said firmly and with as

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much dignity as I could assume, "Colonel, I am a trained shorthand writer and typist, I was officially appointed as such in the War Department, and I did not give up a better salary and come all the way to Washington to copy records on cards with pen and ink, which is work for schoolchildren and not for trained stenographers. Furthermore where I came from, Texas, we don't ask white men to work at the same table with negroes. Unless you can assign me to your shorthand and typewriting division I will at once resign and return to Texas." His eyes blazed and twinkled as he listened to me, he leaned back in his chair, and the black Pittsburg stogie he was smoking and chewing described a circle and then pointed to the ceiling. "Anything ~~more~~ more to sayK" he inquired curtly. "Nothing," I replied. "Return to your desk" he commanded. "Very well, I'm sorry. Good day," I answered and marched out.

Transfer to Stenographic Section

7 I returned to my desk and set to work, determined that this should be my last day. The chief of division came over and inquired the result of my interview. I simply said that the Colonel was a "remarkable man," and a very able one. He said the Colonel was the brightest man in Washington, but a "Tartar." There was great curiosity among the other clerks who had heard that I had seen the "Colonel" and many of them came to my desk to inquire as to the result of my interview, but I refused to give them any satisfaction. About the middle of the ^a ~~same~~ afternoon the chief of division sent for me and smilingly said he had been instructed by telephone to direct me to report at headquarters the next morning for assignment to the stenographic section. He congratulated me on the outcome of my interview. The news of my transfer quickly spread throughout the division

and many of the clerks came to my desk to express good wishes and marvel at my good fortune. They said it meant early promotion.

The Stenographic Section.

7 The next morning I reported for duty at headquarters and a messenger led me to the stenographic section where I was assigned to a desk. It was on the Pennsylvania Avenue side of the building on the ^{third} ~~second~~ ~~or third~~ floor, ~~on the right of the stair~~ directly above the administrative offices. The section was in charge of Mr. J. Heath Dodge, a large fine looking man with white hair and beard and black mustache and eyes. He bore a remarkable resemblance to the pictures of Gen. Robert E. Lee, and came from an old Maryland family. I was formally introduced to the two proof readers, Mr. John Moran, a very pleasant but quick tempered gentleman of Irish descent, and "Judge" Ronne, and elderly Danish gentleman, much emaciated and suffering from locomotor ataxia. . In the same room were two other stenographers, a Mr. Beale, whom the chief always called "Snaky Bell," a low, thickset swarthy man with a husky voice of about 30 who lived in Rockville, and "Johnnie" Morgan, a tall, thin, intellectual looking young man of about 24. Across the hall were four lady typists to whom I was introduced, Mrs. Baker, widow of an army officer, elderly, refined, and very much a lady; Mrs. Lecky, a brunette widow of magnificent physique and about 38, very proud of her good looks and never missing an opportunity of telling about overhearing two men discussing her in which one of them spoke of her as "the ten thousand dollar beauty"; a Miss Russell, a quiet, demure, selfpossessed little ~~lady~~ lady of about 40, who attended strictly to her own business; and lastly, Miss Neyhart,

a diminutive young woman of about 30, with an attractive figure and a homely face ^{and} with an exceptionally sallow complexion.

Mr. Dodge, the chief, was hearty in his welcome. The others were friendly, with reservations. Extending eastward from our room was a series of large ~~xxx~~ connecting rooms fully ~~xxx~~ occupied by the correspondence division which drafted briefs and correspondence relating to the military and hospital records of of the different wars and to claims for removal of the charge of desertion, back pay, higher rank, and pensions ~~pending~~ pending either in the Pension Bureau, the Court of Claims, or Congress. Most of the correspondence clerks were elderly men who had served in the Civil War and entered the civil service soon after its termination. The Record and Pension Office had been established a few years before, ^{and} Col. Ainsworth, then an army surgeon with the rank of captain, was transferred from his post in Arizona to have charge. For many years following the Civil War and the enactment of legislation providing for pensions and other forms of relief hundreds of thousands of claims had been denied on the ground that no military or hospital record could be found to support them, the fact being that hundreds of tons of those records had been stored in warehouses without systematic arrangement. Cor. Ainsworth conceived the idea of copying on individual cards all the records in the possession of the Department so that the original records, which were often in tatters and in precarious shape, might be filed away permanently without the necessity of future handling, and assembling the cards containing the military and hospital record of each individual in a separate jacket or envelope bearing his name, and filing the jackets al-

phabetically, so that the record pertaining to any man who had been in the military service of the United States could be found instantly if his name and regiment were known. It took a thousand or more clerks several years to finish the copying, but when it was completed and the card records were assembled and filed alphabetically, the complete history, so far as shown by the original records in possession of the War Department, relating to any man who served in any war in which the United States was engaged could be found as readily and with as much certainty as a word in a dictionary. Usually claims were presented to Senators and Members of Congress who came down to the War Department to see if there was any record. It was a great satisfaction and service to them to have the record forthcoming instantly. A standing rule of the office was that every letter received from a Senator or Representative should be answered the same day it was received, unless the record disclosed discrepancies, hiatuses, or technicalities that required research or decision, in which case the writer was informed that the case would have prompt attention.

The routine course on receipt of letters was to enter them on a card slip, number both the letter and the slip, refer them to the records division where the jacket containing the complete record of the soldier in question was withdrawn and attached, the whole then going to the correspondence division, where a clerk considered the case and dictated a reply or brief, which was passed upon by experienced reviewers, and then came back to the stenographic section to be copied in the form of a letter for the signature of the chief, Col. Ainsworth. ~~AM~~

An elaborate set of precedents embodying all former de-

cisions under all laws, rules and regulations of all departments of the government relating to claims based on military service was maintained. This great organization worked smoothly and efficiently like an immense well oiled machine. A pony express of messengers walking in opposite directions kept papers moving constantly so there was never any delay.

✓ *Changing Typewriters.*
I had trouble at the start with the typewriting machine that was assigned to me. It was a Remington with a single keyboard, i.e., both capitals and small letters on the same type bars and operated with a single key and a shift, whereas I was accustomed to the Caligraph which had separate key boards for capitals and small letters and no shift keys. Also the arrangement of the letters was different, as was the "touch" or feel of the key when struck to make an impression. I found that changing from the Caligraph to the Remington *was more difficult* than learning to use a typewriter without previous experience because of the ā acquired habits that had become instinctive and were exceedingly difficult to overcome.

As soon as I was released from office in the afternoon I arranged with the Remington agency to rent me a machine and send it to my room so that I could practice on it evenings. I advertised my Caligraph machine and succeeded in selling it within a week. It was several weeks before I began to pick up speed on the Remington. Curiously enough *in later years* ā I was able to operate typewriting machines of different makes without nearly so much trouble.

✓ *Dictation*
The second morning at the office I had my first call to take dictation from the Colonel. He occupied a large room on the west side of the front portico on the second floor. It was furnished with a heavy rug, a large mahogany desk, bookcases,

swivel chairs, a sumptuous sofa, a heavy brass chandelier, and a full length mirror between the front windows. The Colonel was standing by a window when I entered. I said, "Good morning, Colonel," which he acknowledged simply with a slight nod and a glance. I sat in a chair by the desk and he remained standing as he dictated several letters. They were well thought out and carefully phrased. He dictated rapidly, words, phrases, and punctuation marks, with occasional long pauses. I was bothered by the punctuation marks because I had never taken them from dictation before. I found that he had a remarkable memory because when he asked me to read back what he had dictated in one of his letters and ^g failed to read the punctuation marks, he called a halt and asked me to read the punctuation as well as the words and phrasing, and if I left out a single punctuation mark he instantly supplied it. Evidently the transcript I sent down later was satisfactory because the calls for my services became more and more frequent until in the course of a few weeks I was taking practically all of his dictation.

Washington In Spring.
 7 I liked my office work and surroundings. I liked Washington and life in Washington. The city parks were beautiful in April, May and June. Evenings I spent reading. Sundays I went from church to church, studying their interiors, decorations, arrangement, noting their preachers and congregations, enjoying their music, and practicing shorthand by reporting the sermons. The rest of the ^a day, if the weather was fair, I spent exploring Washington and the surrounding country. I visited the Capital, the ~~MUSEUM~~, Smithsonian, the National Museum, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art, which was then in the old Corcoran building ^{on} ~~and~~ the north-

east corner of 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. I wrote home regularly once a week and usually had weekly letters from mother. Occasionally I wrote to Sister Nellie who had obtained a divorce from her husband and was in Chicago with baby Eunice.

Drunk on Bananas.

I had a curious experience with bananas. Until I was sixteen I had never seen a banana. In Texas they were rarely ~~to~~^{be} seen in the towns, never in the country villages, and were high in price. Once during my school teaching days I squandered ten cents to buy a single banana, and was greatly disappointed in it. I thought it insipid and certainly not worth the price. Then at the business college the student body and professors chipped in and bought a whole bunch of bananas at wholesale so that we got them for about five cents apiece. I ate several and liked them. Here on the streets of Washington I saw pushcarts full of them ~~on the streets~~ and priced as low as ten or fifteen cents a dozen, depending on size and condition. I had not tasted a banana for more than a year. One Sunday morning an Italian pushcart full of nice looking bananas stopped in front of the house and I bought a dozen. It was about noon, I had had an early breakfast and was hungry, and as I sat reading I ate half a dozen large bananas. Feeling drowsy I laid down on the bed for a nap and immediately fell into a dreamless sleep. When I awoke the sun was shining. I yawned, stretched, and got up. Stepping to the front window I had a queer feeling and it gradually dawned on me that the sun was shining from the southeast instead of the southwest, that instead of the Sabbath calm and quiet there was the noise and clatter of wagons, street cars, and pedestrians on the street. Looking at my watch I was startled to see that it was 8.40--obvious-

ly it was a.m. and not p.m., and I had only 20 minutes in which to reach the office. I rushed out, ran for a street car, and ^{scarcely} reached the office at 9 a.m. Evidently the bananas I had eaten the previous day had made me drunk and I had been unconscious for about 18 hours. Since that experience I have been cautious in eating bananas, and in my travels I have met a few people who acknowledged ^{that} they had had trouble with ~~bananas~~ ^{this fruit}.

^{Alone}
Life ⁱⁿ a City.

This was my first experience in living in a city and away from home and parental supervision. For the first time I felt free and independent. Always before when at rare intervals I squandered ten cents or twentyfive cents for such luxuries as apples, oranges, grapes, nuts, candies, dates, raisins, or other delicacies, I felt under obligation to follow the family custom of taking my spoils home and dividing with the others. While this was always done cheerfully and as a matter of course, now that I was alone I began to realize that when I bought ^{candy} ~~candy~~ or fruit I could take it to my room and eat as much as I liked, and I did so once a week with great pleasure.

~~In~~

Mother visits me.

In all of mother's letters she expressed her longing to live in Washington and her dissatisfaction ^{with} ~~of~~ her life and surroundings in Texas. In June I received a letter from her saying she was about to visit me and would arrive the following Sunday morning. In my inexperience I was puzzled to know what arrangements to make for her reception. There were no other vacant rooms in the house in which I was living and my room was too small to accommodate both of us. I did not feel that I could af-

ford to pay her expenses at a hotel. The large boarding house where I took my meals had rooms for rent and I engaged one several days in advance. *P* I met mother at the train. She was dressed plainly and after three days and nights in a day coach without a dressing room she looked tired and somewhat shabby and was carrying a disreputable looking satchel. I arranged to have her trunk ~~sent~~ sent to the boarding house. I took a rather dilapidated looking carriage, ^{the only one in sight,} to convey us across town. We drove up to the boarding house shortly after noon when all the well dressed people from the churches were on the street. I paid the driver and together we entered the boarding house. I was horrified to see mother's trunk in the front hall and how cheap and disreputable it looked. I asked a waiter why the trunk had not been carried up to mother's room. He said rather disrespectfully that he didn't know. I asked him to tell the landlady I wanted to see her. She came, a large, stately looking woman. She looked at shabby mother, timid me, and the disreputable trunk, and her face and voice hardened. When I asked her why mother's trunk had not been sent up to the room I had engaged for her she said coldly that I had not notified her that mother would arrive so soon and she had rented all her rooms, so that I would have to look elsewhere. For the moment my heart sank at the thought of having mother, a trunk and a valise on my hands, and the necessity of finding another place and moving on Sunday, a day on which I had been taught to believe no business could be transacted. However, the fact that the landlady had "gone back on her word," had told an untruth, and was hardhearted enough to turn away a woman whose son was a patron of her establishment and stood

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who owned the house showed us over it and offered to rent us the house furnished as it was for three months while she spent the summer in the mountains. I agreed to rent it for \$25 a month, nearly one-third of my salary.

I set up housekeeping.

The next week mother and I moved into the house and were joined by Sister Nellie and Eunice, who was about two years old. A week later father spent a week with us en route to or from the Grand Army encampment. About all I remember of this place is two incidents.

There had been a succession of burglaries in the neighborhood and father gave me a revolver which he had taken as part payment of a bad debt. I had no use for a revolver, but it gave us a sense of security. It must have been ^everal years old then and I have it in my desk at this moment, after carrying it about the world and having all sorts of trouble with British and French authorities over it.

In the house, besides ourselves, was an old, baldheaded, and very irascible gentleman who occupied a front hall bedroom on the top floor. He loathed cats. There was an old and very unattractive cat that belonged to the house, and whenever the cat ventured on the top floor we would hear imprecations and the sound of flying missiles, and the cat would reappear suddenly with a very sullen look on its furry face and an evil expression in its eyes. One afternoon as I sat in the front parlor reading I heard the sound of vigorous swearing and a yell from above, followed by a falling streak of gray outside and a dull sickening thud on the little grass plot in front of the bay win-

dow. It was the cat. It lay flattened out and motionless for a moment and then, leaping to its feet, with its tail up and every hair on end and spitting at every jump, it leaped ~~x~~ through the front door, ran through the house and took refuge in a shed in the rear. The whole performance was comic and the following day the cat seemed to be no worse from its experience of having been thrown from a fourth-story window.

The Ford's Theater Disaster.

In May or June of this year occurred the Ford's Theater Disaster. The building, where I had worked a few days after my arrival in Washington, was undergoing repairs of some kind that necessitated ~~x~~excavations in the basement. One forenoon there was a fire alarm, several fire engines and hook and ladder outfits dashed by the War Department on Pennsylvania Avenue, and in a few minutes word passed quickly from room to room that Ford's Theater Building had collapsed and several hundred clerks were buried in the ruins. Most of the clerks ^{in our office} had worked in the building or had friends there, and some of them abandoned their work to visit the ~~sc~~ene of the disaster. From our windows we could see a great cloud of dust hanging over that part of the city. In the afternoon it was reported that there was great excitement downtown and much indignation against Col. Ainsworth, whom many people were inclined to hold responsible for the disaster, and there was some talk of violence. I passed near the scene after office hours, but the streets were ~~x~~roped off and patrolled so that nothing could be seen.

A few days later there was a coroner's inquest held in Willard Hall, an annex of the old Willard Hotel that faced on

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F Street between 14th and 15th. About 10 o'clock word came from the chief clerk that I and another stenographer named Kelly should go to Willard Hall and report the proceedings.

We found the hall crowded to capacity. ~~X~~ Col. Ainsworth sat at a desk on the stage with one or more attorneys, a chair for the examination of witnesses, and a group of newspaper men. The Colonel sat to one side as an interested listener. Many employes were called as witnesses and for the first time I heard rather severe criticism of the administration, but more especially of Chief Clerk Frech, who was referred to as "an unnaturalized Dutchman," and who seemed to have incurred the violent enmity of a number of employes. Much was made of alleged negligence in ^{not} obtaining a permit from the city authorities for excavating and in the matter of periodical inspections. Several accounts of narrow escapes on the part of employes were quite thrilling. I have forgotten the verdict but recall that there was some relief legislation passed at the next session of Congress for injured employes and widows. Naturally I felt that I had been fortunate in being transferred out of the building before it collapsed.

We move to New York Avenue.

As the time approached when the lease on the 12th Street house would expire I looked about for other quarters and finally rented 1403 New York Avenue, next to the old Oxford Hotel, except the front room on the first floor that was leased to a doctor. We moved into the new quarters on the first of October, 1893.

